



EASTER SONGS

SPECIAL DAYS

PREPARATION

- In advance ask members to let you know of their favourite Easter song
- Ask a member/s to read a speaker's line for the Bible thought
- Fill hollow eggs with Easter items, eg a nail, thorns, silver coins, a bit of bread, feather, mini bar of soap, a cross, a stone, palm leaf - ensure you leave one egg empty
- Provide a selection of hot-cross buns with different flavours and a range of fillings
- Gather for a display: a cross, a crown of thorns and a red voile
- Create a playlist of Easter songs, as chosen by members

Please be aware of allergies.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Easter music and songs have been used to help celebrate Easter for hundreds of years. Whether it is a song reflecting on the crucifixion and sacrifice of Jesus like 'The old rugged cross', or a celebration of his resurrection like 'Christ the Lord is risen today', the words and music help us to engage with this important time of year in the Christian calendar.

Take time to reflect on what Easter means with your group through the joy of Easter songs.

ACTIVITIES

REFLECT

Enjoy an Easter egg hunt together using hollow plastic eggs filled with items that symbolise a part of the Easter story, leaving one empty with nothing in it.

Leaving the empty egg until the end, as the eggs are opened invite the person or another member to tell the part of the story relating to the item. Allow time for thinking and responses to what has been said. Perhaps ask some 'wondering' questions.

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SHARE

Play a selection of Easter songs, as chosen by members. It can be a snippet - or longer. Ask the members to share why the song is a favourite; perhaps it is the tune, or a particular line is meaningful to them, or it brings back fond memories.

EAT

Traditional hot-cross buns are flavoured with spices and fruit. But today there is a wide range of flavours to choose from, including apple, chocolate, berry and even banoffee! But are they still hot-cross buns?

Provide a range of different types of hot-cross buns for members to try and share their thoughts. Don't forget to give a range of fillings and find out who prefers butter, jam or even cheese!

BIBLE READING/THOUGHT

Place the cross on display.

Speaker: The cross helps us to reflect on Jesus' suffering and death on that first 'Good Friday'.

Place a crown of thorns on top of the cross.

Speaker: The crown of thorns was placed on Jesus' head as people mocked him, hailing him 'King of the Jews'.

Wrap the red voile around the cross.

Speaker: The red voile is wrapped around the cross, symbolising Jesus' blood, spilt for us.

Sing: 'I cast my mind to Calvary' (*first two verses*)

'I cast my mind to Calvary
Where Jesus bled and died for me.
I see his wounds, his hands, his feet;
My Saviour on that cursed tree.

'His body bound and drenched in tears,
They laid him down in Joseph's tomb.
The entrance sealed by heavy stone:
Messiah still and all alone.

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*'O praise the name of the Lord our God,
O praise his name for evermore.
For endless days we will sing your praise,
O Lord, O Lord our God.'*

Bible reading

While 'undressing the cross'.

📖 *'On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words.'*

(Luke 24:1-8)

Sing: *'I cast my mind to Calvary' (last two verses)*

*'Then on the third, at break of dawn,
The Son of Heaven rose again.
O trampled death where is your sting?
The angels roar for Christ the King.*

*'O praise the name of the Lord our God,
O praise his name for evermore.
For endless days we will sing your praise,
O Lord, O Lord our God.*

*'He shall return in robes of white,
The blazing sun shall pierce the night.
And I will rise among the saints,
My gaze transfixed on Jesus' face.*

*'O praise the name of the Lord our God,
O praise his name for evermore.
For endless days we will sing your praise,
O Lord, O Lord our God.'*

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This is a line from the Easter song 'Throne of Heaven' by Salvationists Rob Little and Nicholas Samuel:

'There's an empty cross, an empty tomb, but the throne of heaven is occupied.'

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the one whose death and resurrection we are celebrating today. For this was the point at which Jesus had stepped down from the throne of Heaven to earth.

This theme is repeated in Charles Wesley's song 'And can it be that I should gain' with the line 'He left his Father's throne above'; and also in the song 'You laid aside your majesty'.

These lyrics reflect Paul's words to the Christians in Philippi (Philippians 2:5-8) when he writes to them to encourage them to imitate Christ's humility:

📖 'Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed *human*. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death - and the worst kind of death at that - a crucifixion.'
(*The Message*)

And that is how much God loves us. God, in Jesus, came to earth to be one with us, gave up everything and became human. And as the song 'You laid aside your majesty' continues, in doing so, 'You, [Jesus] took all my guilt and shame, when you died and rose again; now today you reign, in Heaven and earth exalted.'

Which brings us back to the words of the song 'Throne of Heaven': 'There's an empty cross, an empty tomb, but the throne of Heaven is occupied.'

Not by a distant God ruling from afar, nor one who is uncaring of our needs, but the throne of God is now occupied by Jesus, who came to earth to live among us, who died for us and conquered death and is alive for us.

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PRAYER

Father God,

Thank you for sending your Son Jesus, so that through him we can be saved.

We praise you for your faithfulness to us and for giving us Jesus as the only example of how we should live.

This Easter, help us in our resolve to put our trust in you and become more like you.

Thank you for your incredible love and compassion to us. Help us show your love, truth and grace in the world.

Amen.

SONGS

- ♪ 'I cast my mind to Calvary [O praise the name]'
[Live worship lyric video](#) feat John Wilds by Bethel (6:16)
[Lyric video](#) by Hillsong Worship (5:29)
[Lyric video](#) by Woodlands Church Derby (4:53)
- ♪ SASB 218 'Christ the Lord is risen today'
[Lyric video](#) by TSA West Video (3:20)
[Lyric video](#) feat Hymns Triumphant Performers by md1801 (3:25)
- ♪ 'The greatest day in history [Happy day]'
[Lyric video](#) feat Tim Hughes and scenes from *Happy Feet* and *Lord of the Rings* by smiler15555 (3:16)
[Lyric video](#) feat Tim Hughes uploaded by Stephen Wilson (3:23)
[Live performance video](#) feat Tim Hughes by Mission Worship (press CC for lyrics) (3:22)
- ♪ SASB 276 'Thine is the glory [Thine be the glory]'
[Congregational lyric video](#) from BBC Songs of Praise by Hymn Channel (3:00)
[Lyric video](#) feat Spring Harvest by YoungPraise (3:42)
- ♪ SASB 215 'You laid aside your majesty [I really want to worship you my Lord]'
[Lyric video](#) feat Heart of Worship Band by Worship Videos (3:20)
[Lyric video](#) feat Derri Daugherty by Easy Worship Resources (3:26)
[Lyric video](#) feat Lynette Li by Cornerstone Community Church Singapore (9:14)
- ♪ 'The Throne of Heaven'
[Lyric video](#) by Gloucester Salvation Army Songsters (3:38)

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WEBSITE AND CONTACT DETAILS

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